

00192

1970/05/07

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~September 9,~~ MAY 7, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILE

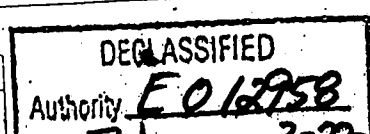
SUBJECT: Douglas Committee Meeting with the President; 5/7/70

Those in attendance are listed in Tab A from the briefing paper.

Dean Gullion summarized the findings of the Douglas Committee. The President said he had read a summary of their conclusions. Gullion expressed great concern over the state of the Vietnamese economy and inflation in Vietnam. He also expressed strong support for the move that had been made a few days earlier in Cambodia. In fact, one of the recommendations in the Douglas Committee report was that such action be taken with respect to the enemy build-up in Cambodia.

Gullion reported they had talked to opposition leaders in South Vietnam and had talked to friend and foe alike in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. The President said following the summary that he had been actively involved in serious diplomatic initiatives but that nothing could be said publicly at the moment. He said that we had to make a difficult command decision, either do something about the enemy build-up or simply pull up stakes and withdraw completely from Southeast Asia.

The President described the situation regarding the increased enemy occupation of territory on the South Vietnamese border, the danger that the Port of Shianonkville might be reopened, the prospects of what the military situation would be a year from now. He said that if Cambodia is successful 90% of all our ground combat forces will be out within the year; that he had to look down the road, that the decision had to be made on the basis of what the consequences of not acting might be a year later. He said that some had advised a massive military aid program but he decided a swift and decisive military action would be more effective and represent less of a commitment to the existing government in Cambodia. He said the sanctuary decision was a difficult one and he characterized it as operation "buy time". The President then discussed what we had already accomplished and the fact that based on results to date, he felt that we would gain at least 8-10 months time. He said the whole purpose was to go after logistic support and supplies and that had it been to meet the enemy head on, there would have been by now 1,000 American casualties. The fact is that there

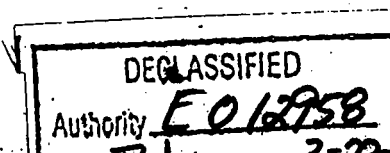


had only been 50 American casualties which was a testimony to the success of our operation militarily and the fact that we were going after precise and limited objectives. He said that we had completely interrupted the enemy's timetable.

There was a general discussion about America's role in the world. The President expressed appreciation to the Douglas Committee for the support they had given, and asked that they continue to help in the fight to preserve America's role in the world. He pointed out that Americans of late are becoming opposed to U.S. involvement in the world and that thoughtful and informed citizens had to take up the fight. Various members of the Douglas Committee expressed strong support for the President's policy in Southeast Asia.



Charles W. Colson



PARTICIPANTS IN MEETING:

General Omar Bradley, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

David Bradshaw, Attorney, Chicago, Illinois

Edmund A. Gullion, Dean of Fletcher School of Law, Tufts University

Dr. Huntington Harris, Business Executive, Virginia

Mrs. Oswald B. Lord, former Representative on Human Rights,
United Nations

Charles Tyroler, Businessman, former Director of Manpower Supply,
Department of Defense

Mr. George Meany, President, AFL/CIO

Abbott Washburn, Ambassador, U.S. Delegation, INTEL SAT Conference

Dr. Donald E. Weatherbee, Director of Graduate Studies, University
of South Carolina

Peter C. White, Executive Secretary, Southern Council on International
and Public Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Henry Kissinger

Charles W. Colson

Henry Cabot Lodge (possibly)

